

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

For the Examiner's convenience, a list of all claims is included below.

What is claimed:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for soliciting and receiving bids, in a computer network, for goods or services necessary to satisfy a spot need of a buyer, comprising:

receiving a request to procure goods or services that are required to satisfy the spot need of the buyer, wherein the request includes information identifying a type of good or service being procured by the buyer;

automatically selecting potential bidders for an auction in response to the good or service identified in the buyer's request by querying a database that includes a plurality of groups of potential bidders, wherein each of the groups of potential bidders is associated with purchasing requests directed to a particular good or service;

electronically notifying each of the potential bidders in the selected group of an opportunity to submit a bid to satisfy all or part of the buyer's purchase request, wherein the electronically notifying includes providing a bidding deadline;

conducting the auction that includes electronically accepting bids from each of the automatically selected potential bidders in the selected group before the bidding deadline expires and not accepting the bids after the bidding deadline expires; and

selecting a winning bidder in accordance with the received bids.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the request includes information identifying a geographic location associated with the goods or services being procured by the buyer, the method further comprises automatically selecting a plurality of bidders by querying

the database with the type and geographic location information from the request, wherein for each bidder represented in the database, a record is stored in the database which includes information representing capabilities of the bidder to deliver at least one good or service in a given geographic area.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein for each bidder represented in the database, a record is stored in the database which includes information representing historical performance of the bidder in connection with one or more prior on-line solicitations.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein automatically selecting, electronically notifying, electronically accepting and selecting a winning bidder are completed within the same business day of receipt of the request.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein automatically selecting, electronically notifying, electronically accepting and selecting a winning bidder are completed within 24 hours of receipt of the request.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein automatically selecting, electronically notifying, electronically accepting and selecting a winning bidder are completed within a predefined amount of hours of receipt of the request.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronically notifying further comprises posting a message on an electronic message board.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronically notifying

further comprises sending an electronic mail message to each of the selected bidders.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one or more steps in the method are performed by the buyer.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising posting information about the request on a web page in the spot marketplace.
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising including a bidding time period and a bidding deadline in an electronic communication.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronically notifying further comprises instructing the selected bidders to post bids before a bidding deadline.
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronically notifying further comprises instructing the selected bidders to post sealed bids before a bidding deadline.
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronically notifying comprises instructing the selected bidders to post partially open bids before a bidding deadline, wherein after a first bid each supplier may revise subsequent bids until a bidding deadline passes.
15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting further comprises notifying all bidders who posted bids about their status.
16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting further comprises

notifying the winning bidder of an award by electronic communications.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, further comprising confirming the award, by the winning bidder, by visiting a web page in the spot marketplace.

18. (Currently Amended) A web-based system for soliciting and receiving bids for goods or services necessary to satisfy a spot need of a buyer, comprising:

a computer that receives a request to procure goods or services that are required to satisfy the spot need of the buyer, wherein the request includes information identifying a type of goods or services being procured by the buyer;

a supplier database, coupled to the computer, that includes a plurality of groups of potential bidders, wherein each of the groups of potential bidders is associated with purchasing requests directed to a particular good or service, wherein the computer automatically selects potential bidders for an auction in response to the good or service identified in the buyer's request by querying the database, electronically notifies each of the potential bidders in the selected group of an opportunity to submit a bid to satisfy all or part of the buyer's purchase request and provides a bidding deadline, conducts the auction that includes electronically accepting bids from each of the automatically selected potential bidders in the selected group before the bidding deadline expires and not accepting the bids after the bidding deadline expires, and selects a winning bidder in accordance with the received bids, and wherein only the bidders invited by the computer may offer bids.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein each of the bidders is electronically coupled to a spot marketplace.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for soliciting and receiving bids, in a computer network, for goods or services necessary to satisfy a spot need of a buyer, comprising:

receiving a request to procure goods or services that are required to satisfy the spot need of the buyer; wherein the request includes information identifying a type of good or service being procured by the buyer;

automatically selecting a plurality of bidders to solicit in response to the request by querying a supplier database with the type information from the request; wherein the supplier database includes records identifying suppliers capable of supplying a plurality of different goods and services to a spot marketplace;

and wherein, for each supplier represented in the supplier database, a record is stored in the supplier database which includes information representing capabilities of the supplier to deliver at least one good or service; posting information about the request on a spot marketplace;

automatically inviting the plurality of the bidders selected from the supplier database to bid on the spot need by sending an electronic communication to each of the selected bidders that includes a bidding deadline;

conducting an auction, wherein only the bidders that are automatically selected bid on the request, wherein bids from the bidders are accepted before the bidding deadline expires and are not accepted after the bidding deadline expires; and selecting a winning bidder to satisfy the spot need of the buyer.